

LOCAL OFFICERS COMPENSATION COMMISSION MEETING MINUTES FROM JUNE 2, 2009

The Meeting was called to order by Chairperson Gary Brown at 6:31 p.m.

Chairperson Gary Brown called the roll with the following members present: Frances Denny, James Graham, Joshua Hill, Betty Lee Ongley, Mike Stoddard and Gary Brown. Norm Terry was absent. Also in attendance was Deputy City Clerk Adam Herringa.

APPROVAL OF THE MINUTES

Approval of the June 11, 2007 Meeting Minutes: Motion by Denny, seconded by Graham, to approve the June 11, 2007 Meeting Minutes as presented. Upon a voice vote, motion carried 5 to 0 with one abstention.

NEW BUSINESS

Review of June 2007 Report to City Council: Motion by Graham, seconded by Brown, to receive the report submitted to City Council by the Local Officers Compensation Commission (LOCC) on June 11, 2007. Upon a voice vote, motion carried 5 to 0 with one abstention.

Mr. Graham recommended that the next three items on the agenda (Review of May 2009 City Council Mayor and Salary Comparison, Discussion of City Council and Mayor Salaries, and Creation and Review of Report Recommending City Council and Mayor Salaries) be reviewed and discussed in combination. Chairperson Brown agreed and there were no objections.

Mr. Stoddard began the discussion by stating that he believes the current salaries of City Council (\$5,000 for Councilmembers and \$7,500 for the Mayor) are appropriate based on salaries received by officers of other jurisdictions. Ms. Ongley stated that she was interested in cities in a similar circumstance as Portage (adjacent to a larger community). She referred to East Lansing where Councilmembers earn approximately \$8,000 annually and the Mayor earns \$9,200. Salaries of commissioners from other cities were mentioned but it was pointed out by several LOCC members that it is often difficult to compare salaries received by officials of other cities as each one operates differently and faces different circumstances.

Mr. Graham emphasized that the salary received by members of the Portage City Council should be viewed as a stipend and that it should not be so high that it serves as an incentive for individuals to serve simply for the financial benefit. He stated that the salary has been historically kept low for this reason. He also pointed out that members of the Planning Commission and possibly the Zoning Board of Appeals do as much work as members of the City Council but receive no stipend. Discussion followed.

Ms. Denny stated that on the various boards and commissions she has been involved with recently, there have been no increases in compensation. She stated that she does not believe a raise for City Council would be appropriate at this time. Ms. Ongley concurred and opined that hospitals are putting caps on salaries. Mr. Stoddard agreed that it would seem inappropriate to recommend an increase given the current economic climate. Discussion followed.

Mr. Graham inquired if it would be appropriate to recommend a decrease. He continued by stating that there would be substantial symbolism in City Council accepting a cut in salary given the reduced fiscal year 2009 - 2010 city budget and economic conditions. Ms. Denny asked if a

decrease would be in order as she believes the current compensation is adequate. Discussion followed.

Mr. Hill was asked if employees at Bronson (his employer) were experiencing salary increases or decreases. He responded that Bronson was forgoing salary increases in 2009. Discussion followed and Mr. Hill inquired if City of Portage employees were experiencing pay decreases. Mr. Brown responded by stating that the LOCC should not confuse the salary of Portage employees, line workers and hospital employees with the salaries of City Council. Ms. Ongley referenced members of the Kalamazoo County Board of Commissioners and stated that she believes they receive some benefits. She then stated that she believes members of the Portage City Council work just as hard, if not harder, than County Commissioners. Discussion followed.

Mr. Brown referenced the possibility of recommending a salary decrease and while it merits discussion, he believed the current salaries are fair. Mr. Graham reiterated that Planning Commission members work hard but are not compensated. Mr. Brown responded that one critical difference is that Planning Commissioners are appointed while City Council must run for office and answer to the voters. Discussion followed and Mr. Brown stated that budgets are tight everywhere and the City of Portage is no different. He would not recommend an increase, but is reluctant to recommend a decrease.

Motion by Ongley, seconded by Stoddard, to approve the proposed LOCC report and recommendation that there be no change to the salaries of members of the City Council and the Mayor.

Mr. Herringa interjected that it would be appropriate, before a vote is taken, that the LOCC complete the proposed report. Discussion followed and the report was completed.

Mr. Brown asked if there was any additional discussion. Ms. Denny responded by stating her intention to support the motion. Mr. Stoddard stated that he likes keeping salaries at current levels as a way of recognizing the efforts of City Council and commented that City Council could always donate contributions from their salaries. Discussion followed.

Mr. Graham stated his position that, given current economic circumstances, he would like to see a pay decrease.

Upon a roll call vote, motion carried 5 to 1 with Brown, Denny, Hill, Ongley and Stoddard voting yes and Graham voting no.

ADJOURNMENT: The meeting was adjourned at 7:21 p.m.

Adam D. Herringa, Deputy City Clerk